



Wilderness Management Plan

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to announce that the National Park Service, in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, is beginning to plan for the future of eight wilderness areas in Lake Mead National Recreation Area and adjacent Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. A wilderness management plan is being developed to establish a framework for long-term management of these areas.

Many of the nation's most outstanding natural and undisturbed areas are preserved as wilderness. Lake Mead NRA and the Las Vegas Field Office of the BLM are dedicated to preserving and interpreting the resources and values associated with Congressionally-designated wilderness.

Three of the eight wilderness areas that will be addressed by the plan are jointly managed by the NPS and BLM. Although the NPS will be the lead agency, this will be a NPS-BLM collaborative effort, which will result in a more thorough plan, ease public involvement, and result in better understanding of the areas' management.

As we are located in one of the fastest growing areas in the nation, there is considerable public interest in wilderness preservation and management. This plan is an opportunity to expose the public to wilderness and how these relatively easily accessible areas can be enjoyed.

The purpose of the wilderness management plan is to ensure that land managers have a clearly defined direction for protecting resources and providing for appropriate public use and enjoyment. Together, the NPS, the BLM, other agencies, and the public will explore ways to address management of the areas into the future.

I invite you to participate in this process by sharing your ideas. Thank you for taking the time to help us plan for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "William K. Dickinson".

William K. Dickinson
Superintendent
Lake Mead National Recreation Area

The Wilderness Act of 1964

The Wilderness Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-577) established the National Wilderness Preservation System to "...secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness". The Act contrasts wilderness with areas where humans and infrastructure dominate the landscape, and recognizes wilderness as an area that is untrammeled by humans and where humans themselves are visitors and do not remain. The Wilderness Act is the guiding piece of legislation for all wilderness areas and describes wilderness as:

- lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition
- an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man
- an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvement or human habitation
- affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable
- having outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation
- devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historic use

Native Americans depended on the bounty of wilderness for survival and held Earth and its wild places as sacred. The great western explorers were inspired by the untamed beauty of wilderness. But after just 200 years, the essential wildness of America was disappearing. In 1964, our nation's leaders formally acknowledged the immediate and lasting benefits of wild places to the human spirit and fabric of our nation, and created the Wilderness Act. Since 1964, the National Wilderness Preservation System has grown almost every year. The value of wilderness depends on the degree to which it remains undeveloped- a contrast to the highly developed world in which most of us live. Wilderness is a part of our history and heritage and is passed as a legacy to future generations.

Wilderness in Clark County, Nevada

The National Park Service completed an initial wilderness review of all the lands within Lake Mead National Recreation Area in 1974, when 409,000 acres were proposed for wilderness. The recreation area's 1986 general management plan identified 558,675 acres as meeting the criteria of the Wilderness Act, and 115,700 acres which potentially meet the criteria. As called for in *NPS Management Policies*, all of these areas were subsequently managed as *de facto* wilderness, with no actions being taken that would diminish their wilderness suitability, pending action by Congress. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) completed a similar wilderness study of its lands in 1991 and identified 572,640 acres having wilderness characteristics. All of the BLM areas were managed so as not to impair their suitability for wilderness designation pending action from Congress. Seven BLM areas were adjacent to areas in Lake Mead that were recommended for designation.

In November 2002, Congress enacted the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-282), which, among its provisions, designated a series of wilderness areas throughout Clark County. Nine of these wilderness areas are wholly or partially located in the recreation area; four of the nine areas are on both NPS and BLM lands. These nine designated wilderness areas offer picturesque views and remarkable natural and cultural resources found in the desert Southwest. Rugged mountains, secluded valleys, flat alluvial fans, steep canyons, astonishing geological formations, caves, springs, and seeps define the landscape. Known populations of rare plants inhabit some areas within the dominant Mojave desert habitat of creosote bush, black brush, yucca, Joshua trees, teddy bear cholla, and desert willow. Wildlife species, such as bighorn sheep, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, jackrabbits, rattlesnakes, lizards, Townsend's western big-eared bats, and Gila monsters, can be observed. The wilderness units provide vital habitat for the threatened desert tortoise and other species of concern. Archeological resources are found throughout the wilderness units, including petroglyphs, lithic scatters, and remnants of historic mining operations, each artifact providing a glimpse into past habitation. Opportunities for silence, solitude, and isolation abound within the wilderness areas.

This plan covers eight of the nine wilderness areas (with 3 jointly managed). The ninth, Muddy Mountains Wilderness, is covered under a separate plan being developed by BLM.

- **Pinto Valley Wilderness** is a colorful area comprised of rugged hills and scenic valleys. Gypsum soils support populations of the rare Las Vegas bearpoppy.
- **Jimbilnan Wilderness** has sand dunes which provide suitable habitat for two rare plants- the Beaver Dam milkvetch and sticky buckwheat.
- **Black Canyon Wilderness** is a maze of peaks and side canyons with vertical cliffs extending to the edge of the Colorado River with spectacular scenery. Visitors may catch a glimpse of bighorn sheep, bobcats, and mountain lions in this unit.

- **Eldorado Wilderness*** includes the picturesque and rugged Eldorado Mountains. Winding, deep side canyons provide excellent opportunities for isolation and seclusion.
- **Iretea Peaks Wilderness*** has rugged mountains, secluded valleys, and flat alluvial fans providing opportunities for solitude in a setting of scenic splendor.
- **Nellis Wash Wilderness** includes portions of the sacred Newberry Mountains and has remnants of past mining activities.
- **Spirit Mountain Wilderness*** contains the Spirit Mountain complex which is a designated traditional cultural property.
- **Bridge Canyon Wilderness** contains the Newberry Mountains which rise to an elevation of 5,600 ft. and offer a cool refuge from the surrounding desert heat. Outstanding petroglyphs are found in the cottonwood lined Grapevine Canyon.

(* indicates a jointly managed wilderness)



Timeframe

The wilderness management plan and environmental assessment is expected to take three years to complete. Interested persons will be kept informed of the planning process and notified when public input is especially needed.

You may provide comments through any of the following methods:

1. Fill out and return the comment form enclosed in this newsletter
2. Attend one of the public meetings
3. Submit comments via the internet at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>
4. Write a letter to:

Denver Service Center - Pat Kenney
National Park Service
Lake Mead NRA / Wilderness Management Plan
12795 W Alameda Parkway
PO Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225

Plan to attend one of our scoping meetings:

October 3, Tuesday

4 - 7 pm

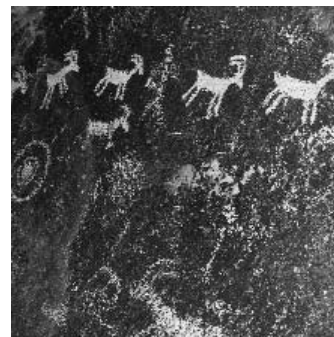
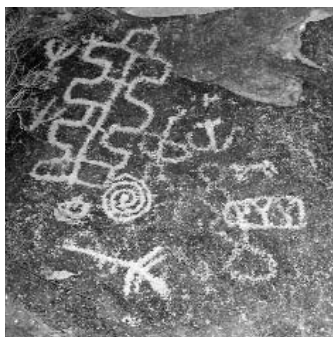
Henderson Convention Center
200 Water Street
Henderson, Nevada

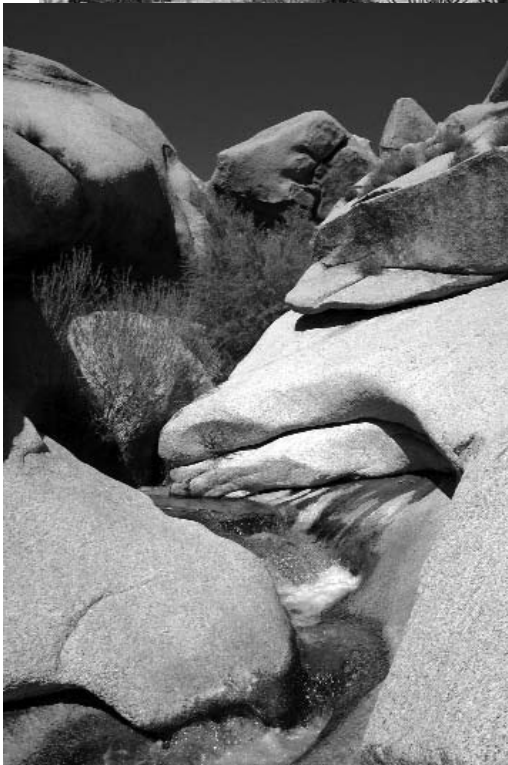
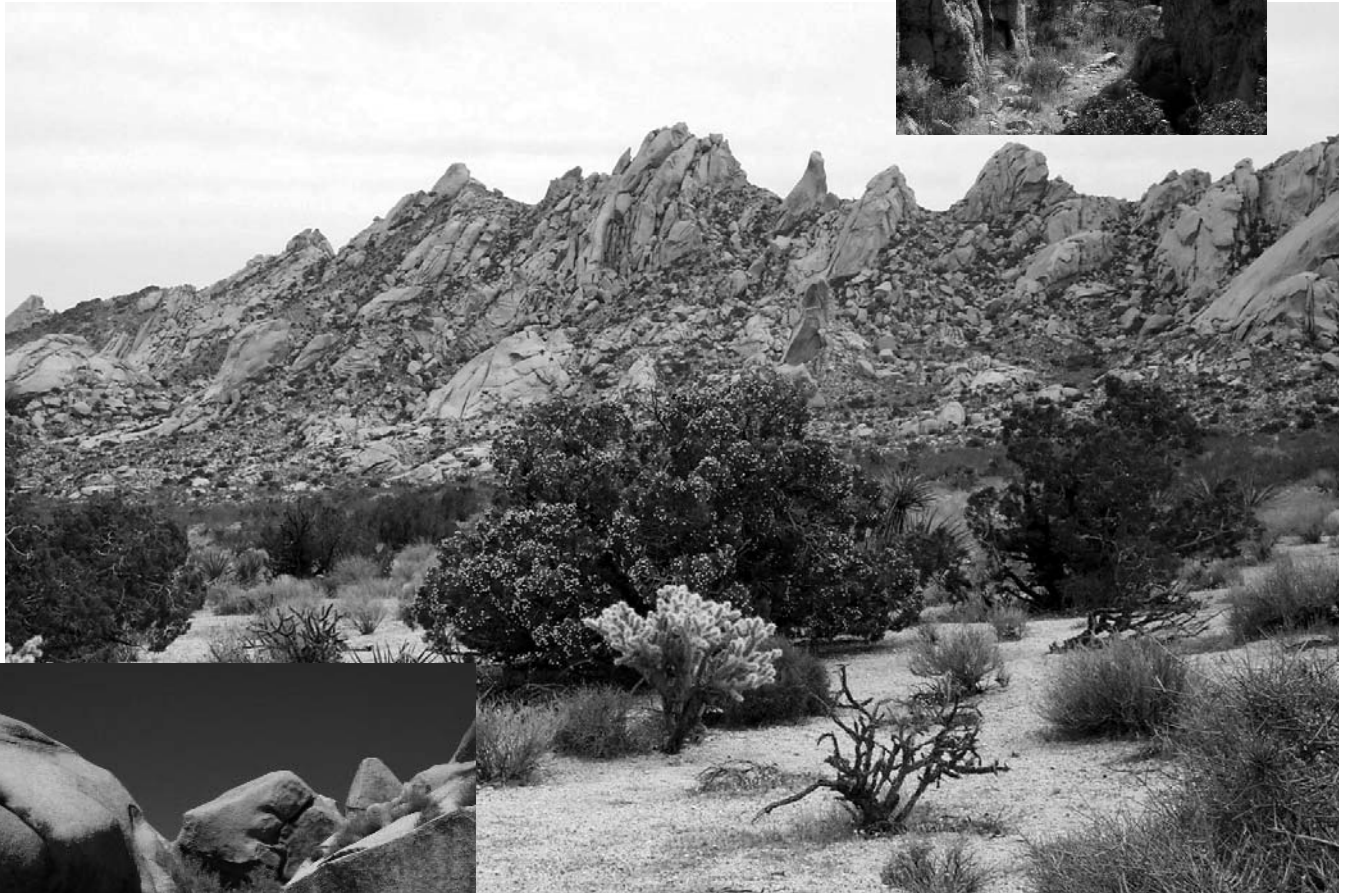
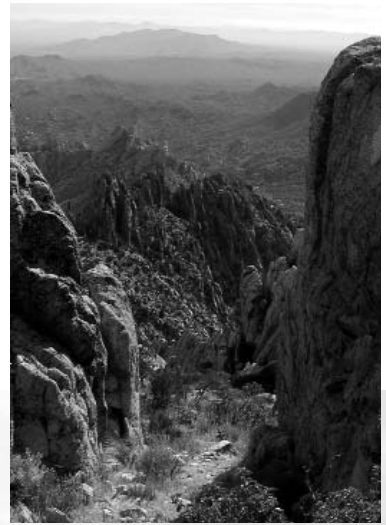
October 4, Wednesday

4 - 7 pm

Laughlin Government Center
101 Civic Way
Laughlin, Nevada

Meetings will be open houses, so you may arrive at any time





DENVER SERVICE CENTER - PAT KENNEY
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